

territory, tensions between the two countries remained unresolved, and for good reason—the illegal seizure of these territories was in direct violation of no less than four United Nations Security Council Resolutions passed the year before (UNSCRs 822, 853, 874, and 884).

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States and Azerbaijan have maintained robust ties and a strong strategic partnership. Our Nation was one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijani independence in the early 1990s, and since then, we have worked together with the Azerbaijani government to protect and promote European energy security, increase trade and investment, and combat terrorism and other transnational threats.

Azerbaijan has proven time and again to be steadfast partners, with her servicemen proudly serving shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. Forces in Kosovo and Iraq. Azerbaijan began its peacekeeping presence in Afghanistan in 2002 and was one of the last foreign countries to withdraw its troops. In support of the U.S. mission, Azerbaijan allowed about 40 percent of all cargo destined for NATO personnel in Afghanistan to pass through their country.

One year following the end of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, I extend my best wishes to the people of Azerbaijan following the fortification of their nation's territorial integrity, and urge both Armenia and Azerbaijan to sign a definitive and final peace agreement. Peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan will boost bilateral relations between the two countries and ensure increased regional cooperation.

HONORING DR. JAMES D. ECKERT

HON. JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 15, 2021

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Madam Speaker, Dr. James Eckert is one of many fellow Americans born stateside but whose path took him to Puerto Rico, where he raised his family and devoted himself to the development of education. His leadership in the military and educational fields touched many in our dear Island. Born on October 2, 1932, in New York City, New York, he attended the University of Southern California where he received his bachelor's degree. After graduation, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, receiving a Commission as a Marine Corps Officer in 1960. His recent passing is a deeply felt loss to his family but also to the many people in Puerto Rico that were touched by him.

During his military career, he served in the Republic of South Korea and South Vietnam. He also served at sea aboard the USS *Boxer*, a 27,100-ton *Essex*-class aircraft carrier that in the late 1950's was transferred to the Atlantic Fleet as an "interim amphibious assault ship" and mainly operated in the Caribbean area with the Tenth Provisional Marine Brigade on board. While the USS *Boxer* was in Puerto Rico, Marine Officer James Eckert met his future wife Mrs. Carmen "Tata" Eckert from the town of Fajardo. Their relationship blossomed and was blessed by the arrival of 3 children who grew to become professional in their own right; Attorney Heydsha Colon, Mr. James D. Eckert and Mr. Larry E. Eckert who enriched the family with a bouquet of 5 grandchildren.

After 25 years of service and with the rank of Major, James D. Eckert retired from the United States Marine Corps with the satisfaction of having served our nation with great honor. During his military career Major Eckert's valor and leadership was recognized by various decorations, medals, badges and commendations. Upon retirement Major Eckert established his family in Puerto Rico where he pursued and obtained Master and Doctoral Degrees in Education and worked in different leadership positions ranging from High School to University level.

The Marine Corps motto of "Semper Fidelis" or Always Faithful accompanied him through his life after retirement, where his sense of duty manifested in his voluntary service in various military and civic organizations. He served as President of the Puerto Rico chapters of the Military Order of the World Wars and the Reserve Officers Association and was an active member of the Marine Corps Association, the Navy League of the United States. Respected as a leader, family man, father, grandfather and restless advocate of Puerto Rico's veteran and military community, he always demonstrated his patriotism, bravery, and courage. Without a doubt Major James D. Eckert is an example and inspiration to follow by all.

HOMETOWN HERO—EDWARD REYES

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 15, 2021

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Edward Reyes of Carrollton, TX who served in the U.S. Army and served as an infantryman in Vietnam.

Last weekend, I had the honor of awarding Edward the 2021 Congressional Veteran Commendation. We honor him for his courage and bravery when entering the Army in June 1969 and being honorably discharged in May 1971.

Since then, Edward has made a great impact on his community by serving as the President of Vietnam Veterans of America Dallas Chapter, working in law enforcement, serving on the Executive Board of Directors of the American Legion Post 453, and serving in various other organizations.

Edward has always put others first and continues to make a lasting impact on the lives around him. It is an honor to recognize the distinguished veterans of TX 24, like Edward, and to preserve their stories for future generations of Americans through the Congressional Veteran Commendation. I thank Edward for his service and the sacrifices he made to protect our great nation.

HONORING MICHAEL HULSIZER FOR HIS SERVICE TO KERN COUNTY AND THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

HON. KEVIN MCCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 15, 2021

Mr. MCCARTHY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Michael Hulsizer, a constituent,

friend, educator, and dedicated public servant. Throughout his illustrious career, Michael has been a tireless advocate for students throughout Kern County and influential in shaping the policies that impact our children, teachers, and our families. After dedicating nearly 45 years of service to Kern County, Michael will be retiring from his position of Chief Deputy for Governmental Affairs for the Kern County Superintendent of Schools next month.

Michael began his career in education as a teacher at Desert High School, located in Eastern Kern County and part of the Muroc Joint Unified School District. While at Desert High, he served as teacher sponsor of the school's Mock Trial team, eventually helping to lead the 1982–83 team to win the California State Mock Trial Championship. His leadership at Desert High and passion for providing students with the best possible academic and extracurricular opportunities led him to the Kern County Superintendent of Schools' Curriculum and Accountability Division, as a History and Social Science Consultant, in 1985. In this role, Michael helped to implement the highly regarded "We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution" annual competition, during which teams of high school students throughout Kern County put their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution to the test, and developed the Kern County History Day program, which continues to be a highly popular event among Kern County students of all ages.

In the early 1990s, Michael played a leadership role, on behalf of the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, in the creation of the Kern County Network for Children, a collaborative network of community-based organizations and stakeholders that aims to support Kern County's most vulnerable students. Nearly 30 years later, the Kern County Network for Children continues to serve families and at-risk youth through its collaborative model and system of family resource centers, thanks largely to Michael's leadership. In 2005, Michael brought his passion for Kern County students and civics education to our nation's capital by participating in the third annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education, hosted by the joint leadership of the United States Congress.

During his tenure as Chief Deputy for Governmental Affairs for the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Michael had a hand in crafting education policy at the state and local levels and served as the primary liaison on federal education issues. He was particularly instrumental in the adoption and implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula in the State of California, and most recently helped to guide Kern County schools through the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring that they received the federal and state relief funds necessary to continue to educate students throughout Kern County.

I have had the privilege of working with Michael on issues facing students in our community since my time in the California State Assembly and have consistently sought out his opinion and guidance over the years. Michael is respected by elected officials, educators, and students alike for his deep knowledge of education policy, and has left an indelible impact in our schools, community, and the State of California. While he will no longer be with the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, I have no doubt he will continue to champion causes important to him and our students. On

behalf of the 23rd Congressional District of California, I wish him well in his retirement as he enters this new chapter in life.

CONGRATULATING ARKANSAS' NATIVE SON—CRAIG BLAIR—ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE FOREST SECTOR

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 15, 2021

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the successful career and retirement of Arkansas' native son and ordained Minister, Craig Blair. Throughout his almost 40-year career, Mr. Blair has set himself apart as an example to his community and his peers in the forestry sector.

Born in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and the son of an Arkansas school principal and a school librarian, Craig pursued a career in forestry, graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forest Management from the University of Arkansas at Monticello and a Masters in Forestry Degree in Forest Business from Mississippi State University, where he was also the College of Forest Resources 2018 Alumni Fellow. Over his 39-year career, Craig held a variety of positions in the forestry sector, culminating in his appointment as President and CEO at Resource Management Service (RMS)—a firm that manages timber assets in my district—and in the forest products sector. During his more than 10-year tenure as the firm's leader, Craig oversaw a skilled and experienced team of forestry and investment professionals who built and managed portfolios of forest assets that were collectively valued at more than \$4 billion and that included investments in the United States, Australia, Brazil, China, and New Zealand. Craig became Chairman of the RMS Board of Managers on October 1, 2021.

Among his many accomplishments as President and CEO of RMS, Craig led the firm's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion within the forestry profession, developed the first open ended forest investment fund, and championed collaborative approaches to landscape and species conservation, helping to establish Conservation without Conflict. Craig has also been actively engaged in numerous forestry organizations, serving as Chair on the boards of the National Alliance of Forest Owners, the World Forestry Center, and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc., where he received the 2017 SFI President's Award.

The husband of Rita Blair for more than 34 years and father of two sons—Braden and Paul—I take this time today to celebrate Craig Blair. I am proud to call him my forestry colleague and my friend. May we always look at his work ethic and his dedication to his family, the forestry sector, and his church as an example to emulate.

IN RECOGNITION OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL ALEXANDER JEFFERSON

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 15, 2021

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today in tribute to Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Jefferson, one of the most decorated pilots in Michigan, whose heroic service as a Tuskegee Airman in World War II is being recognized in a rededication ceremony for Jefferson Field, named in his honor in Detroit, Michigan.

Born in Detroit, Michigan on the 15th of November 1921, Lieutenant Colonel Jefferson grew up flying model airplanes in the same field that is now named for him. He graduated from Detroit's Chadsey High School in Detroit and earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia. He did graduate work in Chemistry at Howard University and earned a Master of Science in Education from Wayne State University in Detroit.

Following three months of combat training in Selfridge Field, Michigan, Lieutenant Colonel Jefferson graduated from a pilot training course at the Tuskegee Army Airfield. He served as a P-51 fighter pilot with the Red Tail, 332nd Fighter Group 301st Fighter Squadron in Ramitelli, Italy. Over the course of 18 long range escort missions deep into enemy territory, he bravely provided protection from vicious enemy aircraft. His unit escorted bombers headfirst into the action. They never lost a single plane.

On August 12, 1944, three days before the invasion of Southern France, Lieutenant Colonel Jefferson was shot down while firing at German radar stations on the coast. He was captured by the Germans and kept as a prisoner of war for nine months, ninety miles from Berlin. There, he witnessed firsthand the atrocities committed by the Nazis. He was liberated by the American forces on the 29th of April 1945 and was discharged from active duty in 1947. He retired from the reserves in 1969 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After the end of the war, Lieutenant Colonel Jefferson became an elementary school science teacher in Detroit, where he would retire as an assistant principal in 1979. A member of various church, educational, and alumni organizations, as well as one of the founders of the Detroit Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen. He is a member of the Tuskegee Airman Speaker Bureau, a life member of the Silver Falcon Association, and has served as an Admissions Counselor for the U.S. Air Force Academy.

He has received numerous awards and accolades for his bravery and his selfless service for our country, including a Purple Heart Medal, an Air Medal, a POW medal, an Air Force Achievement Medal, and many, many more. On October 14, 1995, Lieutenant Colonel Jefferson was inducted into the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame.

Please join me in recognition of Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Jefferson on this celebration of his lifelong service to our country.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BRIDGES HOME RULE ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 15, 2021

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Bridges Home Rule Act. This bill would repeal a redundant 1997 federal law that makes it a crime for a person in the District of Columbia to obstruct any bridge connecting D.C. and Virginia. The District already had, and continues to have, its own local law prohibiting obstructing a bridge in the District. There is no federal law that prohibits a person in Virginia from obstructing such a bridge or a person in any state from obstructing a bridge connecting two states, and, fortunately, D.C. does not need a federal law to keep our bridges clear either.

This law is as offensive as it is redundant. It harks back to a time when a private group in D.C. attempted to block the 14th Street Bridge into Virginia, although there is no evidence that D.C. authorities failed to act. The District's local criminal law prohibiting obstructing a bridge takes care of any obstruction occurring here.

Under the 1997 federal law, "whoever in the District of Columbia knowingly and willfully obstructs any bridge connecting the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Virginia . . . shall be fined not less than \$1,000 and not more than \$5,000, and in addition may be imprisoned not more than 30 days. . . ." Under D.C. law, a person may be subject to imprisonment and/or fines for "crowd[ing], obstruct[ing], or incommod[ing] . . . [t]he use of any street, avenue, alley, road, highway, or sidewalk."

The courts have long held that D.C. may repeal federal laws that predate the Home Rule Act of 1973 (HRA) and apply exclusively in or to the District, but have not ruled on whether D.C. may repeal post-HRA federal laws that apply exclusively in or to the District. My bill would avoid any court challenge the District could face if it tries to repeal this 1997 federal law.

This bill is an important step in increasing home rule for the District, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

HOMETOWN HERO—JAMES VITTON

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 15, 2021

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize James Vitton of Dallas, TX who served in the U.S. Navy and completed over 4,600 military flight hours.

Over the weekend, I had the honor of awarding James the 2021 Congressional Veteran Commendation. Captain Vitton was commissioned in 1984, and was designated a Naval Aviator in 1986.

James courageously flew 341 combat hours during the Iran/Iraq War and served as the Flight Engineer Division Officer, Aircraft Division and Assistant Operations Officer.

Among many of his positions during his Operational Level of Warfare tenure, Vitton